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Gertrude Mason, M.D.

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## ACTING PLAYS DRILLS AND MARCHES ENTERTAINMENTS

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HAROLD ROORBACH, Publisher, 132 Nassau St., N. Y.

# GERTRUDE MASON, M.D.

OR

## THE LADY DOCTOR

**A Farce in One Act**

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY

BY

L. M. C. ARMSTRONG

34  
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NEW YORK  
HAROLD ROORBACH, PUBLISHER

132 NASSAU STREET  
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# GERTRUDE MASON, M.D.

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## CHARACTERS.

|                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| GERTRUDE MASON, M.D. . . . . | <i>A young Physician</i>           |
| BERTHA LAWRENCE, }           |                                    |
| ELLA GRAY, }                 | <i>Her Friends</i>                 |
| MISS JANE SIMPKINS . . . . . | <i>A Spinster of Uncertain Age</i> |
| MRS. VAN STYLE . . . . .     | <i>One of the "400"</i>            |
| NORAH . . . . .              | <i>Dr. Mason's Cook</i>            |
| MARIE . . . . .              | <i>A Lady's Maid</i>               |

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TIME, *the Present.* PLACE, *New York.*

TIME OF REPRESENTATION, *Thirty Minutes.*

~~18000~~

## COSTUMES, Modern.

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## PROPERTIES.

Desk, with papers, books, writing materials, etc., and revolving chair, down R. Couch, with pillows, and arm-chair, down L. Cabinet, up L., containing medicines, bottles, glasses, instruments, etc. Mirror against wall, up R. Doorbell, to ring off stage. Watch, and purse containing money, for GERTRUDE. Jeweled pin and newspaper for MRS. VAN STYLE. Small dog, wrapped up in a shawl, for MISS SIMPKINS. Tray, with tea-things, for NORAH. Framed diploma hanging against wall.

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## ABBREVIATIONS.

In observing, the actors are supposed to face the audience. R. means right ; L., left ; C., centre ; R.C., right of centre ; L.C., left of centre ; UP STAGE, toward the rear ; DOWN STAGE, toward the audience.

# GERTRUDE MASON, M.D.

OR,

## THE LADY DOCTOR.



*SCENE.* — DR. MASON'S consulting-room. Double door C. in flat, showing a hallway backing. Doors R. and L. Desk and revolving chair down R. Couch and armchair down L. Cabinet up L., containing medicines, instruments, etc. Mirror up R.

DR. GERTRUDE MASON *DISCOVERED* seated at desk. She is rather pale, and is dressed in a black gown of severe masculine cut.

GERTRUDE. Heavens, how this tedious waiting is telling upon me! Shall I have a patient to-day, I wonder? Every step on the stairs gives me a nervous chill, and every ring of the bell sends my temperature up to 102. If this goes on much longer, the first patient requiring my serious attention will be Dr. Gertrude Mason. Of what use are diplomas and certificates, of what use is my stunning brass door-plate with its attractive announcement that here resides —

GERTRUDE MASON, M.D.

OFFICE HOURS: 9—11 AND 2—4.

SUNDAYS: 8—12.

It has hung there now for three weeks, and I still pass my office hours in solitary grandeur. M. D.! How proud I was of those two letters; of my right to bear them! And now I am almost discouraged. Where are my dreams of "Fame"? Where my hopes of becoming a very prop of suffering humanity? To think of all I have sacrificed! Every girlish pleasure, everything that might prove a distraction from my serious work! And then to wait for weeks, only to end by being my own first patient! Is this satisfaction—happiness? Happiness! (*Bitterly.*) How dare I ask for happiness when my whole aim was to gratify my ambition? I was a fool, when I had the means of humoring every whim, to

throw away youth, good looks,—for I was told often enough that I was pretty,—to follow such a will-o'-the-wisp as Fame? I have grown thin and pale, bending over my books night after night. I feel a hundred years old—and I dare say I look a thousand. How old am I, anyway? I have positively stopped counting. Twenty-three—no, four—no, five! (*Goes up to mirror, R.*) Yes, as I thought, I certainly look like a washed-out old maid—and—yes, there certainly is a wrinkle! Who would recognize the Gertrude Mason of six years ago? (*Thoughtfully.*) I wonder if people have at last given up trying to marry me off! I really think there was some ground for coupling my name with Jack's! How he teased me that night in the garden when I told him my decision in regard to my life-work! He positively hooted at the very idea; and ended up by kissing me, in spite of all my struggles and protests. Ah, Jack, Jack, it was a happy time, and I have thrown it all away for an empty idea! (*Sits herself again despondently at desk.*)

*ENTER NORAH, C. D., holding her cheek.*

NORAH. Och, Miss Gerthrude, dairlin'! Ye should see the toothache av me!

GERT. Sit down, Norah, and let me see.

NORAH (*sits*). Sure, it's the whole night Oi've walked the flure wid the pain.

GERT. Which tooth is it? (*Examines teeth.*)

NORAH. Sure, the lift soide wan.

GERT. Why, Norah, your teeth are like pearls; there's not a spot on one of them.

NORAH. Thin it must be on the roit soide.

GERT. (*examines again*). Sure enough, there is a tiny cavity. I am sure I can relieve that pain very soon. (*Goes up L. to cabinet, and takes out bottle.*)

NORAH (*aside*). Wad she be afther pullin' it Oi wonther?

GERT. (*coming down*). Now, Norah, lean back and open your mouth again.

NORAH. Faith, Miss, dairlin', it's a fairy ye air. The pain av it's gan intoirly, jusht wid the tooch av yer fingers.

GERT. (*aside*). Thank goodness! I'm nervous even about sticking in a wad of cotton. (*Goes up and replaces bottle.*) But that will all pass off with habit.

NORAH (*aside*). Troth, that was a close call! Oi'll be afther havin' a headache nixt toim—she'll niver dare thry to pull the head off me.

GERT. (*coming down*). Are you quite sure the pain has gone?

NORAH. Praise the saints! Yis, Miss.

GERT. And are you well—quite well—otherwise? You seem to be ailing so often since you came here. You never used to be ill at home. (*Business up stage.*)

NORAH. Ohone! Oi do be growin' ould. (*Aside.*) Poor dairlin', Oi musht give her a bit av pleasure wid her dochterin', aven if it's only ould Norah that has to invint a new desaze ivery day.

GERT. (*coming down*). I think you still look a little pale, Norah.

NORAH (*aside*). Oi moight have known she'd niver be contint to lave me off that azy. (*Aloud.*) Troth, Oi have jusht a bit av a headache.

GERT. Why didn't you say so at once?

NORAH. An' me shtomick, too, Miss dear, do be all upset.

GERT. To be sure! Doubtless your headache comes from the stomach. Let me see your tongue. (*NORAH shows tongue.*) Perfectly clear. (*Goes up to cabinet.*)

NORAH (*aside*). Howly saints! An' me atin' tin haird biled iggs last noight, jusht to put a bit av fur on me tongue.

GERT. (*business with medicine*). I cannot find the seat of her ailment. Every function is perfectly normal, yet not a day passes without her complaining. Well, Norah, I will give you a simple tonic. It will certainly do you no harm. (*Sits.*)

NORAH (*aside*). Niver fear! Oi'll power it in the sink.

[*Bell rings off c.*]

GERT. (*rising excitedly*). Quick, Norah! The bell! That certainly must be a patient! (*EXIT NORAH, c.*) How my heart thumps! I must be calm. Calmness is the first requisite of professional success, and I should scarcely find one out of a hundred of my patients with a pulse as rapid as my own at this moment. But this is the first time.

NORAH (*putting head in at c. door*). Shure, it was only the milkman, Miss. (*Disappears.*)

GERT. (*throwing herself disgustedly into chair*). The milkman — what a come-down! I might have remembered that he always comes at this hour. How could I think it was a patient? Surely none will ever stray in here. How Jack would jeer to see me sitting here like a spider on the watch for some unlucky fly to tumble into its web. And I haven't even the excuse of needing to earn my living. Ambition — vanity — the thought of having my name applauded — of being talked of — (*Bell rings.*) There — another! (*Starts toward c. door, then comes down.*) Nonsense! It's probably the grocer this time.

ENTER NORAH, c.

NORAH. Sure, Miss, there do be a faymale beyant, askin' for yez.

GERT. (*excitedly*). Bring her in at once, Norah! But no — no hurry — she'll think I was waiting for her. The patient should wait for the doctor, not the doctor for the patient. Say that the doctor begs her to wait a few minutes; just at present she is very much engaged. (*EXIT NORAH L., nodding.*) Now, Dr. Mason,

be calm; and above all else, be cold. It would go ill with the diagnosis of a physician whose eyes were blinded with tears of sympathy — and I am such a cry-baby. But that will all pass off in time, and I shall be as hard and unfeeling as any one. If Jack were here to see me now! There I go again! What is Jack to me, that he should creep like a thief into my brain, to steal away my thoughts? Why can I not forget him? (*Resolutely.*) I must, I must! He has surely forgotten me long ago. Why, I haven't even spoken to him for six months. (*Looks at watch.*) Well, I think my patient has waited long enough now to satisfy my dignity. (*Goes to door, L.*) Will you kindly step in here?

ENTER MARIE, L.

MARIE. Good-morning, Miss, I hope I am not disturbing you too much. My mistress, Miss Murray, has sent me to ask a great favor of you.

GERT. (*with professional air*). Please come at once to the point, my good girl, as my office hours are nearly over, and I must be off to visit my other patients. (*Feeling her pulse.*) What is your trouble?

MARIE. My trouble? Oh, there's nothing ails me — it is my mistress —

GERT. Then Miss Murray is ill? I will call at the house at once.

MARIE (*aside*). I wonder if the poor thing is crazy; she seems to think every one is sick! (*Aloud.*) Oh, dear, no! She's not sick — (*aside*) only cranky!

GERT. Not ill? But I don't understand you — what then does she want of me?

MARIE. Just what I'm going to tell you. You see, Miss Murray is very particular about the fit of her dresses, and since Madame Félicée left town she has been unable to find any one who quite suits her. She has noticed you passing several times lately, and has been much struck with the beautiful fit of your dresses. So she sent me to ask if you would be kind enough to give her the address of your tailor.

GERT. (*angrily, turning to desk*). Oh, she shall have it.

MARIE (*aside*). Sweet-tempered creature!

GERT. (*sarcastically, handing paper to MARIE*). Give your mistress my kindest regards.

MARIE. Oh, thank you, miss, I'm sure. Good-morning. (*EXIT C.*)

GERT. Now isn't that enough to drive one mad? The address of my tailor! So that is my first prescription!

ENTER NORAH, L.

NORAH. Well, Miss Gerthrude, dairlin', an' how did yez get on wid yer furst patient?

GERT. Oh, her case is not dangerous. I have sent her a remedy that will effect a complete cure, I think.

NORAH (*aside*). The Saints be praised, she has some wan to docther at last! Oi nadent be botherin' me poor ould brain to invint a desaze this day. (*Bell rings off C. NORAH EXITS, but returns at once.*) There do be a poor craythur wid her hand in a cloth.

GERT. Ah? Well, take her into the other room; I will come in directly.

[*EXIT NORAH, C. GERTRUDE goes up to cabinet L., selects instruments, etc., and EXIT L. RE-ENTER NORAH, C; she goes to L. door and listens.*]

NORAH. Sthill as the grave! (*Starts, covers her ears, and comes down C.*) Shure Oi niver can sthan' an' hear the poor craythur groan. Wurra! Wurra! How can Miss Gerthrude take up wid the loikes av this doctherin'? Shure she moight be contint wid the foin loicence she has to hang up on the wall, an' thin marry poor, dear Masther Jack, that's jusht breakin' his hairt fur her.

*ENTER GERTRUDE, L., looking frightened and sick.*

GERT. Here, Norah, show the poor woman out, and (*takes out purse and gives money*) give her this; it may do her some good.

NORAH. Faith, more than the medicine, Oi 'm thinkin'. (*EXIT, with money, L.*)

GERT. (*sinks exhausted into chair*). Heavens, how near I came to fainting! Surgery is certainly a branch of practice that I shall be forced to abandon, for the mere sight of blood makes me faint. I was actually forced to send that poor woman to a male hospital to have even that slight operation performed. (*Bell rings off C.*) Well, my appetite is spoiled for dinner. I shall hear the grating of that broken bone for the rest of the day. What a triumph this would be for Jack! (*Stamps impatiently.*) Jack again! Why can't I keep that boy out of my head?

*ENTER NORAH, L., conducting MRS. VAN STYLE.*

NORAH. Plaze walk in, mem. (*Stands up C.*)

MRS. VAN STYLE (*advancing*). Good-morning; I saw your sign, and being greatly in need of your help, I hastened to call.

GERT. (*offering chair*). Please be seated, madame, and state your case, in order that I may relieve you if possible.

MRS. V. S. (*aside, sitting L.*). That is certainly a delicate way of putting it. (*Aloud.*) Certainly, but (*glancing at NORAH*) I should much prefer to do so in private.

GERT. Oh, that is only my housekeeper, a motherly old soul who has been with me since my childhood. You need not mind her. Indeed, she often assists at my operations.

MRS. V. S. (*aside*). Operations? Ah, yes, I suppose she acts

as witness to her financial transactions. (*Aloud.*) Nevertheless, I should much prefer to be alone with you.

GERT. As you please. (*To NORAH.*) Norah, go to the kitchen, please, and finish your work there. (*EXIT NORAH, c.*) Now, my dear lady, we are alone (*sits at desk, R.*); tell me what your trouble is, and I think I can promise to find the means to relieve it.

MRS. V. S. Indeed, it is delightful to hear you speak in that way. In your business nowadays one encounters so much fraud that it is almost impossible to obtain any assistance without being forced to pay most exorbitant prices. But you seem to have adopted it rather out of philanthropic motives.

GERT. Very largely, it is true.

MRS. V. S. It is very good of you to do so; for one may often come quite innocently into a position, like my own, where the means of which you speak are one's only salvation.

GERT. I fully appreciate the seriousness of my profession, I assure you; and I am ready to make any sacrifice to relieve suffering humanity.

MRS. V. S. Yes, indeed. And just now so many are suffering financially. The hard times, you know—

GERT. (*tapping forehead; aside*). I fear that my patient is suffering here. (*Aloud.*) Yes, yes; but tell me what your trouble is, and kindly do so as briefly as possible, for I expect other visitors.

MRS. V. S. (*taking jewelled pin from her dress, and holding it out to GERTRUDE*). Examine these stones. I can guarantee their genuineness. What should you say the pin is worth?

GERT. My dear madame, I have no time to waste on such matters, and am not in any case an expert in gems. I never wear them myself.

MRS. V. S. Certainly not. It would be in the worst possible taste, besides exposing your patrons to very serious embarrassments. I should never think of intrusting you with the pin if I thought you would wear it, in public, at least. It was a Christmas gift from my husband, and were any of my friends to recognize it—which is quite possible, the design being so unusual—it might come to my husband's ears. This must be avoided at all costs, as my husband is very quick tempered, and should he discover that I had come to you—

GERT. (*impatently*). I assure you, your family affairs interest me as little as your gems. All this can certainly have nothing to do with your illness. (*Turns to desk.*)

MRS. V. S. (*aside*). What delicacy, to speak of debts as "illness," and loaning money as "relieving suffering humanity"! I should never have received so much consideration from a man. He would have been simply brutal in his talk about getting into debt, and pronounced the pin worthless, or at least beaten me down to half its value. (*Rising and going over to GERTRUDE.*) Now, my dear young lady, please put a value upon the pin. I am quite as anxious as you are to finish our transaction.

GERT. (*turning impatiently*). I pray you, replace the pin, and tell me what is the matter with you.

MRS. V. S. Well, then, I will tell you quite frankly. My last winter's cloak is shockingly old-fashioned, and as my husband is forever preaching economy, I dare not ask him for a new one—you see, he is so easily irritated by trifles like that. But I have just seen a cloak—ah, a creation! a veritable work of art!

GERT. (*aside*). Insane, poor thing. (*Aloud.*) But, madame, I cannot write you a prescription for a winter cloak.

MRS. V. S. I must—absolutely must—have it. It is only one hundred and fifty dollars!

GERT. You are trifling with me—wasting my time. I beg you, once for all, tell me what is the matter with you. (*Paces desperately up and down stage followed by MRS. VAN STYLE.*)

MRS. V. S. The fact is, I have spent my whole allowance on a ball-dress. Well, it was worth the price,—pink satin with moss green miroir velvet. The effect was absolutely irresistible—so becoming!

GERT. This is too much!

MRS. V. S. I have the reputation of being one of the best-dressed women in New York, and I simply must have that cloak. Come, now, will you take the pin as security for one hundred and fifty dollars for six weeks?

GERT. (*indignantly*). Lend you money? What can you be thinking of? Go to a pawnbroker.

MRS. V. S. To a pawnbroker? What are you, then?

GERT. (*with dignity*). I am Dr. Gertrude Mason, madame, as you might have learned from the sign to which you referred. What could possibly have given you so false an impression?

MRS. V. S. (*producing a newspaper, and pointing to advertisement*). Here it is: "Money loaned, at reasonable rates, on jewellery and personal effects. All transactions strictly confidential. Isabella Lichtenstein, 27 Brown Street, 3d floor". Is not that your address, I should like to know?

GERT. The address is correct; but you are on the wrong floor. This is the second.

MRS. V. S. Good heavens! And I have been telling you all my private affairs! Oh! you will not betray me?

GERT. Madame, I am a physician. One of the first duties of my profession is silence regarding the sufferings of our fellow-men—why not also regarding their follies? The latter are, I am sure, by far the more deep-seated and uneradicable evils.

MRS. V. S. I am greatly embarrassed at my unfortunate mistake.

GERT. (*conducting MRS. VAN STYLE to L. door*). Not more so than I, believe me. Good-morning.

MRS. V. S. Good-morning. (*EXIT, L.*)

GERT. Oh, these women of fashion! To what humiliation will

they not submit for the sake of clothes? If a doctor could cure them of their vanity, he might make his fortune. (*Bell rings off C.*) The bell again! I wonder what new annoyance I shall have to submit to? It is getting hard on my nerves.

*ENTER NORAH, C.*

NORAH. Shure, the patients is comin' fasht the day. Here's another wan fur yez, miss.

GERT. Are you sure she asked for me?

NORAH. Yis, miss; it wor the dochter she was ashkin' fur, an' no mistake. Will Oi let her wait a bit?

GERT. For heaven's sake, no! She might escape!

NORAH (*in C. door*). Jusht stip in this way, plaze.

*ENTER MISS JANE SIMPKINS, a lap-dog in her arms, carefully wrapped up in a shawl. EXIT NORAH.*

MISS SIMPKINS. Oh, my dear doctor, such a relief to find you in, you must have so many patients! I have come to you in great trouble, to beg your help.

GERT. You shall certainly have all it is in my power to give. Kindly be seated and tell me your symptoms. I trust I may be able to relieve you. [*MISS S. sits, L., GERTRUDE at desk, R.*]

MISS S. How good you are! I was sure that you, another woman, would understand and feel for me. A man practitioner would have ridiculed my sufferings, perhaps even sent me away unaided.

GERT. Indeed, no. Every physician is in duty bound to treat with consideration every one who applies to him for relief.

MISS S. True; but the delicate sympathy of a woman is like a healing balm to the wounded soul of the sufferer.

GERT. Will you not tell me the nature of your trouble?

MISS S. I am not ill, but one who is dearer to me, almost, than life itself.

GERT. My dear madame, it is then your child who is in danger? Why did you not send for me to come directly to your house?

MISS S. No, doctor, not my child — quite. I have never yet found the man on whom I could bestow my heart and hand. I am a woman whose lot would indeed have been a lonely one but for the affection of one dear object. It is the fear of losing him that has brought me to implore your help. O doctor, save my darling!

GERT. (*impulsively, rising*). Take me to him. Come, let us make haste. Every moment may be precious.

MISS S. (*taking dog from wraps*). Here he is, my precious pet. For three whole days he has not eaten a bite, and — just hear how labored his breathing is. (*Caresses dog.*) Oh, my darling! my sugarplum! if you only knew how you frighten your poor Janie by being so ill! (*Kisses dog.*) But see, my sweet, see the nice lady. (*Lifts dog up to GERTRUDE.*) See, pet, she will make you well.

Give her a pretty kiss, dear. You shall stay with her till you are well again. (*To GERTRUDE.*) You will take him in charge, will you not, doctor? My sweet little angel! I will come and see him every day until he is well, so he will not miss his Janie.

GERT. (*indignantly*). Do you take me for a veterinary surgeon? I am very sorry, but it is quite impossible for me to do as you wish. I must support the dignity of my position. What would my other patients think if they were to share my attention with a dog? No, I assure you, it is quite out of the question.

MISS S. (*wrapping dog up, and rising*). Come, my darling, come. She does not feel for us. The heartless thing is unsexed by her masculine profession. (*Weeps.*)

GERT. I am really sorry for you, but you see my position. I will, however, give you a piece of good advice. Let your dog fast for a few days, and then don't begin over-feeding him again. You will soon find him recovered.

MISS S. (*to dog*). Hear, my pet. The savage! I am to let you fast! Come, my dewdrop, we will leave this place where our sufferings are so little understood. (*EXIT, weeping, c.*)

GERT. (*throws herself on couch, and buries face in pillows, sobbing; then recovers*). Oh, fate is against me! What a fall from the lofty dreams of ambition! I have staked my whole future, my whole happiness, on this hazard, and the reward of my hard study, my long waiting and striving, is to receive as my first patient an over-fed, asthmatic lap-dog! Oh, I should die of laughing if it were not so tragic! How Jack would gloat over me now! But no, he loves me too well. (*Bell rings off c.*) He would pity me.

ENTER NORAH, C.

NORAH. It's yer two frinds, Miss Bertha an' Miss Ella. They do be ashkin' wad yez have a minnit av toime to spare for thim? Will Oi tell thim "no"?

GERT. (*hastily drying eyes*). Oh, yes, I have time—time for anything—all the time there is. But wait, let me bathe my eyes. They must not see that I have been crying. Bring the young ladies in, Norah, and tell them I have just finished an operation, and must make myself presentable. (*EXIT, R.*)

NORAH. Troth, the poor ould leddy wid the boondle must have been in a bad way intoirely. Poor Miss Gerthrude was faylin' that bad over her, the tears was a-shtandin' in her purty eyes. Shure, it's too tinder-haired the dairlin' is, altogether! This dochterin' business will be the death av her. Faith, it's jusht breakin' me hairt. (*Covers face with apron, goes up to C. door, and calls out.*) Jusht sthep in, plaze. Miss Gerthrude will be right out. (*ENTER ELLA and BERTHA.*) Jusht sit yez down. The dochter has been thot busy the marnin' wid patients, she's worn out intoirely. She's jusht after havin' an operation, and she do be clanin' up after it. (*EXIT, c.*)

BERTHA. An operation ! Impossible ! I am sure our plot must have succeeded. Poor old Norah doesn't want us to know that Gertrude has nothing to do.

ELLA. Have you really been keeping her patients away?

[*They sit upon the couch.*]

BERTHA. I'll tell you all about it. It was my own idea, and I'm sure it cannot fail. It does, I confess, seem like treason to my best friend, but I simply cannot bear to see my brother breaking his heart for Gertrude, and I am sure she will never listen to him as long as she has any hope of getting a practice.

ELLA. Do go on, I am wildly curious.

BERTHA. Well, as I said before, I knew Gertrude's ambition, and I felt convinced that it would be all up with poor Jack if once she should succeed in establishing herself, so my last resort was to try to prevent her from getting any patients.

ELLA. Does Jack know of your designs?

BERTHA. Oh, yes; he gave his consent. He would do almost anything to win Gertrude. Every day I station a man in the corridor outside this flat, and as soon as a patient comes, he is told the doctor is out attending a very dangerous case, and will probably be gone all day.

ELLA. I see. Of course the patient cannot wait twenty-four hours, and so employs another physician.

BERTHA. To-day we have been trying even more heroic measures. Jack knows that Gertrude, in spite of her choice of a profession, has a horror of operations. This morning one of the girls in our factory crushed her hand, and Jack had her brought here, with orders to report the treatment she received. She came back just now to say that "the poor young lady," as she called our worthy doctor, had nearly fainted at the sight of blood, and had packed her off, with a five dollar bill, to old Dr. Jones, the surgeon at the hospital.

ELLA. If Gertrude should ever find this out ?

BERTHA. She never will find it out. And even if she should — the end justifies the means. I suppose the factory-girl's case was the great operation Norah was boasting of.

ELLA. Well, I must say, I think you are playing an unfair trick upon poor Gertrude.

BERTHA. I only hope it may cure her of her ambition. Last night at the Spencers' Jack was introduced to a ridiculous old maid who was fretting herself almost sick over an absurd pug dog. The creature had been over-fed to such a degree that it had grown asthmatic, and Jack conceived the brilliant idea of sending her to Dr. Mason. I fancy that will be too bitter a pill even for Gertrude. She must capitulate.

ELLA. Hush, here she comes !

[*They rise.*]

ENTER GERTRUDE, R.

GERT. (*embracing friends*). My dear girls, how glad I am to see you! You are not here as patients, I trust? [*All sit down.*]

BERTHA. Oh, dear, no! I am as sound as a fish.

ELLA. And I, too.

GERT. Ah, I am so glad. I am quite used up with my professional labors to-day, and it is a relief to sit down and have a real good talk. But I fear that it won't last long, for, as a matter of fact, my office hours are not yet over, and we may be interrupted at any moment. (*BERTHA and ELLA exchange signs.*) I have been fairly overrun to-day with people seeking my aid.

BERTHA (*aside*). And not getting it.

GERT. And now tell me how you have been employing yourselves all these weeks.

BOTH. Delightfully; I'm engaged.

GERT. What, both?

BERTHA. Yes, dear; in a little over two months I am to be married, and one object of my visit is to beg you to be my maid of honor — Jack is to be best man. Don't say "no", please — please don't.

GERT. My dear child, how can I possibly absent myself so long from my office? What would my patients do?

BERTHA. Oh, bother your patients! There are too many doctors in town now.

GERT. Bertha, how can you be so frivolous?

ELLA. A little frivolity do you no harm, Gertrude dear. You are not quite a fossil yet, though you have tried hard enough to make yourself one.

BERTHA. Say "yes," Gertrude, for Jack's sake if not for mine. You cannot think how hard he takes your desertion.

GERT. (*startled*). Jack? He still cares? (*Sadly.*) Oh, no, dear, he must have quite forgotten me by this time.

BERTHA (*earnestly*). Forgotten you? Ah, if he only could! Gertrude, dear, if you should but see him, I am sure your heart could not fail to go out to him more than to your patients. Poor fellow, he is so listless, so despondent, it is enough to break one's heart — and all for you, Gertrude — all for you.

GERT. (*embracing BERTHA impulsively*). O Bertha, do you really think so? Say it again, dear, if you really mean it.

BERTHA. I do not think, I know. Jack has made me his confidante all through, and he knows that I am here to-day to try to persuade you to lay aside your pride and ambition — for we all know that is all that stands between you two. I am his messenger, Gertrude. What answer may I take him?

[*All rise and stand C. The two girls cling entreatingly to GERTURDE, who stands irresolute.*]

GERT. What shall I say?

ELLA. Say "yes"!

BERTHA. My answer, Gertrude — Jack's answer.

GERT. (*yielding*). Tell him — yes.

BERTHA (*embraces GERTRUDE*). Oh, thank you, darling — my sister!

ELLA. Come, Bertha, let's hurry to dear old Jack with the good news. I am sure he has hungered long enough for a crumb of comfort!

GERT. But tell him, too, how hard it is for me to give up my calling, even for him.

BERTHA. Yes, dear; I will tell him how hard it is for you to — be happy. [*EXEUNT BERTHA and ELLA, C.*]

GERT. (*going up C.*). Ah, my happiness almost frightens me! (*Calls.*) Norah!

*ENTER NORAH, C., hurriedly, carrying tray, etc.*

NORAH. Shure, Miss Gerthrude, phwat's the matther? Is the house on fire? Troth, an' ye scared me out av seven years' growth.

GERT. Nothing is the matter, Norah, only — O Norah, I'm going to marry Mr. Jack!

NORAH (*dropping tray in her excitement*). Marry Mr. Jack, is it? Troth, an' Oi'm that glad Oi cud hug yez, dairlin'!

GERT. (*throwing arms around NORAH's neck*). So you shall, you dear, faithful old soul! And it will not be the first time, either. Yes, Norah, I am convinced that woman's highest vocation is to become the happy wife of a good man.

NORAH. Roight yez air, dairlin'. An' Oi'm hopin' there'll be wurruk for poor ould Norah in yer new home.

GERT. Of course you shall stay with me always, and share my happiness just as you have shared every joy and sorrow of mine since you carried me in your arms as a baby.

NORAH. An' now ould Norah will dance at her baby's wedding. Shure, she's not too stiff for a good ould Oirish jig yet!

[*Picks up her skirts and breaks into an Irish jig as the curtain falls.*]

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